

HONOLULU PRESS.

VOLUME I.

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NO. 31

FOUR LIVES IN ONE.

It was not without a very natural sinking of the heart that Ronald Wyde divested himself of his clothing, and took his position, by the old man's direction, on the stout table, side by side with the dead. A flat brass plate pressed between his shoulders, and one of the carbon points, slanted in a little insulated stand, rested on his bosom and quivered with the quickened motion of the heart beneath it. The other point touched the dead man's breast.

"Are you ready?"
"Yes."
The old man pre and a key, and as he did so a sharp ting, hardly more than a tickle, prickled Ronald Wyde's breast. A sense of languor crept slowly upon him, his feet tingled, his breath came slowly, and waves of light and shade pulsed in the indistinct alternation before his sight; but through them the old man's eyes peered into his, like a dream. Presently Ronald would have started if he could, for two old philosophers were craning over him instead of one. But as he looked more steadily, one face softly dimmed into nothing, and the other grew brighter and stronger in its lines, while the room flushed with an unaccountable light. The little eye blinked once more, a vague sensation that the current had somehow ceased to flow, roused him, and he raised himself on his elbow and looked in blank bewilderment at his own dead self lying by his side in the daylight, while the sunrise tried to peer through the webbed panes.

"It is over!" he asked, with a puzzled glance around him, and added, "Which am I?"

"Either, or both," answered Herr Labensfunke. "Your identity will be something of a problem to you for a day or two."
Aided by the old man, Ronald awkwardly got into the sleazy clothes that went with the exchange—growing less and less at some each minute. He felt weak and sore; his head, ached, and the wound left by the fresh amputation of his little finger, throbbled angrily.

"I suppose I may as well go now," he said. "When can I get my old self back again?"

"On Thursday night, if all works well," said the old man. "Till then, good day."
Ronald Wyde's first impulse, as he shuffled into the open air, was to go home; but he thought of the confusion his sadly mixed identity would cause in Frau Spritzkraut's quiet household, and came to a dead stop to consider the matter. Then he decided to quit town for the interval of four days—to go to Dresden, or anywhere, his next step was to slouch into the nearest beer cellar, and call for beer, pen and paper.

While waiting for the beer he surveyed his own reflection in the dingy glass that hung above the table he sat by—glad that gave him a face a way look, as if seen through heated air. He felt an amused pride in his altered appearance, much as a masquerader might be pleased with the disguise he had assumed, and caught himself wondering whether he were likely to be recognized in it. Apparently satisfied of his safety from detection, he turned to the table and took the letter addressed to Frau Spritzkraut, explaining his sudden absence by some discreet fiction. He got along well enough until he reached the end, when, instead of his own flowing signature, he found a tiny, awfully familiar name of Hans Kraut. Tearing the sheet angrily across, he wrote another, and signed his name with an effort. He was about to seek a messenger to carry his note, when it occurred to him to leave it, which he did; and had thereby the keen satisfaction of hearing pretty Lotchen confess, with a blush on her fair German cheek, that they would all miss Herr Wyde very much, because they all loved him. Turning away with a sigh that was very like a hiccup, he trudged to the railway station and took a ticket to Dresden, going third-class as best befitted his clothes and appearance.

He felt ashamed enough of himself as the train rumbled over the rails, and between the capital and the capital, and gave him time to think connectively over what had happened, and what he now was. His fellow-passengers carried him side-long looks, and gave him a wide berth, as if he were a fat-headed window of one pane each, that winked out of the red-tiled roof like sleepy eyes, seemed to leer drunkenly at him as they scudded by.

Ronald Wyde's account of those days in Dresden was vague and misty. He crept along the bustling streets of that somber, gray city, that seemed to look more natural by cloud-light than in the full sunshine, feeling continually that the struggle between the two incompatible natures now so strangely blended. Each day he kept up the constant manfully, passing by the countless beer cellars and drinking booths with an assumption of firmness and resolution that cooled slowly away toward nightfall, when the animal body of the late Hans Kraut would contrive to get the better of the animating principle of Ronald Wyde; the refined nature would yield to the toper's brute craving, with an awful sense of its deep degradation in so succumbing, and, before midnight, Hans was gloriously drunk, to Ronald's intense grief.

Time passed somehow. He had memories of sunny lounges on the Brühl's terrace, looking on the turbid flow of the eddied Elbe, and watching the little steamboats that buzzed up and down the city's flanks, settling now and then, like gad-flies, to drain it of a few drops of its human life. Well-known friends, whose hands he had grasped not a week before, passed him unheedingly; all save one, who eyed him for a moment, said "Poor devil!" in an undertone, and dropped a silver-rod into his maimed hand.

He felt glad of even this lame sympathy in his lowliness; but most of all he prized the moistened glance of pity that flashed upon him from the great dark eyes of a lovely girl who had passed him now and then as he slouched along. Once, a being degraded and scurvy as his own outward self, turned to him, called him "Dutbruder," asked him how he left, then all in her, stared at Ronald's blank look of non-recognition, and passed on with a muttered curse on his own stupidity in mistaking a stranger, in broad daylight, for his enemy, Kraut.

Another memory was of the strange landscape that seemed to almost paralyze him after even moderate exertion, and caused him to drop exhausted on a bench on the terrace when he had shuffled over less than half its length. More than once the suspicion crept upon him that only a portion of his vitality now remained to him, and that its greater part lay mysteriously coiled in Herr Labensfunke's life-magnet. And this, in turn, broadened into a doubting distrust of the Herr himself—a dread lest the old man might in some way appropriate his stock of life to his own use, and so renew his fast expiring lease for a score or two of years to come.

At last this dread grew so painfully definite that he hurried back to Freiberg a day before his appointed time, and once more found his two-fold self wandering through its devious streets.

It was long after dark, and a thin rain slanted on the slippery stones, as he again made his way through the deserted and sleepy paths of the town to the old philosopher's house. He was wet, chilled, weary and sick enough at heart as he leaned against the old stone doorway and waited for an answer to his knock. The splash of the heavier rain-drops from the tiled eaves was the only sound heard for many minutes, until, at last, pattering feet neared him on the inside, and a child's voice asked who was there.

To his friendly response the door was opened half-wide, and Vogel's pretty face peeped through.

"Was Herr Labensfunke at home? No; he had said that he wasn't at home; but then, she thought he was in the long room where mamma went to sleep. Could he be seen? No, she thought not; he was very tired, and, in his own Vogel's opinion, he was going to sleep, too, just as mamma did. The wizen little face, with its eldritch eyes and tangled hair, was withdrawn, and the door began to close. Ronald forced himself inside, and grasped the child's arm.

"Vogel, don't you know me?"
The girl, in nowise startled, gravely set her flickering candle on the door-step, looked up at him wonderingly, as if he were an exhibition, and said, as thought not, unless he had been asleep on the table.

"Good heavens!" cried Ronald; "can this child talk of nothing else but people asleep on a table?"

"But, as he spoke, a thought whirled through his brain. He drew the poor, half-witted thing close to him and asked: "Can Vogel tell me something about mamma, and how she went to sleep?"

The child smiled on, pleased to find a listener to her foolish prattle. All he could connect into a narrative was, that the girl's mother, some seven or eight years before, had been drafted of her life by the awful lightning, and that, as the child said, "the Herr D. etor ever since had talked just like mamma."

His dread was well founded, then. The old man's own dream and end was to prolong his wretched life; could he doubt that he would not now make use of the means he had so unwisely chosen in his way? He turned about, half maddened.

"Grief!" he cried, "I must see the old man! He couldn't see him, she whined. He was a leap up there on the table. At 1 o'clock he had said he would wake up. He pushed passed her, mounted to the long room, propped open the unfastened door, and entered.

The old man and the corpse of his former self lay together under the light of a lamp that swung from the beam overhead. An insubstantial carbon-point was directed to each white, still breast. From the old man's hand a cord ran to a key beyond, arranged to make or break connection at a touch. By it stood a clock, with a simple mechanism attached, that bore upon a key like the first, and which he planned to press up when she hands should mark a given hour. The wild had said that he would wake at 1, and it was now past midnight.

Ronald Wyde comprehended it all now. The wild old man's feeble life had been withdrawn into the greater magnet, and mixed therein with what remained of his own. In less than an hour the key would fall, and the double stream would flow into and animate his young body, which would then wake to renewed life; while the cast-off bell beside it, worn to utter uselessness by a tollsome century, would be left to molder as a mottled garment.

Surely he was about to be lost; his life depended upon instant action. And yet, comprehending this, he went to work slowly, and as a somnambulist might, acting almost by instinct, and well knowing that a blunder would mean irreversible death.

Carefully disengaging the cord from the old man's yet warm grasp, and setting the carbon point aside, he lifted the shriveled corpse and bore it away, to cast it on the waste-heap in one corner. Returning to his work, he stripped himself and lay down in the old man's place. As he did so the distant minister bells rang the three-quarters.

He braced his shoulders firmly against the brass plate under him, and moved the carbon point steadily back to its place, with its tip resting on his breast—the silk wrapped wire that dangled between the magnet quivering as he did so, as with conscious life. Drawing a long breath, he tightened the cord, and heard a faint click as the key snapped down.

He was now alone, and a thin rain slanted on the slippery stones, as he again made his way through the deserted and sleepy paths of the town to the old philosopher's house. He was wet, chilled, weary and sick enough at heart as he leaned against the old stone doorway and waited for an answer to his knock. The splash of the heavier rain-drops from the tiled eaves was the only sound heard for many minutes, until, at last, pattering feet neared him on the inside, and a child's voice asked who was there.

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eral Agency here, and the above-named General Agents
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Sea at the most reasonable rates, and on the most fa-
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3d " \$48.75 \$48
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12th " 3,415.45 3,248
13th " 3,987.75 3,496
14th " 4,640.50 3,744
15th " 5,383.15 3,992
16th " 6,205.15 4,240
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* The second and subsequent premiums are likely to
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Total.....Reichsmark 106,500,000
The Agents of the above Company, for the Hawaiian
Islands, are prepared to insure Buildings, Furniture,
Merchandise and Produce, Machinery, etc., also Sugar
and Rice Mills, and vessels in the harbor against loss
or damage by fire, on the most favorable terms.
210-326

THE LIVERPOOL AND LONDON AND
Globe Insurance Company.
BISHOP & CO., AGENTS.
ESTABLISHED 1835.
Unlimited Liability to Stockholders.
Assets.....\$3,236,100
Reserve.....6,730,000
INCOME FOR 1879:
Premiums received after deduction of re-
insurance.....\$5,338,395
Losses promptly adjusted and paid here.
210-327

UNION MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY
of San Francisco.
CASTLE & COOKE, AGENTS.
INCORPORATED 1875.
210-328

Shipping.

Wilder's Steamship Company.
(LIMITED.)
New Route to the Volcano!
Via Keauhou.
ROUTE AND TIME TABLE
THE KINAU
Leaves at 6 o'clock P. M.: Touching at Lahaina,
Maui, Molokai, Kaula, Kawaihi, Laupahoehoe,
Hilo and Keauhou. Commencing on Monday,
October 13, and thence on the first Monday following
the arrival of the Alameda and Mariposa, due here on
the 18th and 22nd of each month.
The steamer KINAU will make the VOLCANO TRIP,
reaching Keauhou on Wednesday morning, giving
Tourists two days and two nights at the Volcano
House. When the eighth and 22nd of the month fall
on Monday, the KINAU will leave that day.
Tickets for the round trip \$50.00, which pays all
charges.
The KINAU will arrive in Honolulu Sunday morn-
ings on Volcano Trips. On Hilo Trips, will leave